

FILE 359

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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REPORT

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1. Background

- a. The recent purges in the Hungarian Government and in the AVH were necessitated by the growing power of certain elements whose aims differed in varying degrees from the line laid down by Moscow. The chief difference appeared to lie in the extent to which each group embraced cooperation with the Soviet regime. Five groups, each of which worked individually for the enhancement of its own prestige (and thus became easy prey to the ruling Communists) were as follows:

- (1) Laszlo RÁJK and his associates represented a fairly powerful force;
- (2) Cardinal József Mindszenty, who was the focal point for a rather sizable group;
- (3) Archbishop József Grösz, who headed another strong group;
- (4) The "Organization of the Generals," which had a measurable degree of control over the military;
- (5) Gábor Péter, AVH head, and his followers in the AVH.

- b. All important arrests and campaigns against organizations were normally made only on the orders of the Political Committee, which was under Premier Rákosi's control. Thus, orders emanating from the Committee were in effect Rákosi's, and the leader of the AVH could not conduct a purge on his own authority. The timing of each arrest and trial, and the degree to which each trial was propagandized were strictly controlled. each trial was coordinated with events in other countries.

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On the other hand, there have been numerous trials which have received no publicity at all, and in several instances have been kept secret from the AVH personnel itself. Among these are the liquidations of SZAKASITS, former President; MAROSAN, Minister of Light Industry; KADAR, Minister of Interior; and ZOELD, Minister of Interior.

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2. AVH Purges

- a. The first purge occurred in the fall of 1950, when Gábor PÉTER, former chief of the AVH, took action against Colonel SZUECS, his deputy. SZUECS knew too much about the background of the RAJK affair, and there was a feeling that he was about to defect and publicize the case. He allegedly had amassed several million forints and some gold [] and was ready to escape with his mistress, CSERESNYES (fnu). CSERESNYES was an AVH agent, who had worked with SZUECS in gathering evidence to be used against RAJK. Both were arrested, and SZUECS was hanged. Others arrested in this purge included Major RADVANYI (fnu),¹ and Pál BOLGAR, secretary of the AVH Party Committee. Also affected by the RAJK case, and dismissed from service were Colonel KAJLI (fnu), who was in charge of internal security; Colonel FARKAS (fnu), Chief of Personnel; and Colonel BALOG (fnu), Chief of Division I.² This purge had particularly strong repercussions among the AVH Border Guards and in AVH Division II. It affected in all, about 152 individuals.
- b. The second purge in AVH ranks was the major one which succeeded in removing Gábor PÉTER and his group, the majority of whom had been in the AVH since 1945 and were of Jewish descent. Authority to carry out the purge came from RAKOSI, but the action was directed by Mihály FARKAS, then Minister of Defense, and his son, Vladimir FARKAS, Chief of AVH Division VIII. The purge had its inception around Christmas of 1952, when PÉTER was arrested. János TIHANYI and Miklós BAUER were arrested on 11 January 1953. On 13 January, Vladimir FARKAS called a meeting of all AVH division heads and their deputies, and informed them of the arrests and of the charges of political espionage against the men. FARKAS stated that RAKOSI had showed him the evidence three weeks previously, and had informed him that the evidence had been provided by the Hungarian Communist Party, which had had the group under surveillance for 18 months. The charge against PÉTER were conspiracy within the AVH, [] and having been a HORTHY informant prior to 1945.
- c. The following individuals were arrested with PÉTER:

János TIHANYI, Deputy Chief of AVH Division VIII.
 Miklós BAUER, Chief of AVH Division VIII/3.
 György SZALLAZI, Chief of AVH Division I/2.
 György SANDI (LANDI?)
 CSAPO (fnu), Chief of an unknown section in AVH Division VII.
 Béla KOOS, AVH Party Committee.
 Lajos LOMBOS, Major.
 Marton KÁROLYI, Deputy Chief of AVH Division VI.
 (fnu), Tibor, Deputy Chief of AVH Division VI (Division VI had two Deputy Chiefs)
 Ivan BERAN, Major, Chief of AVH Division I/6.
 Tamás MATRAI, Colonel, Minister of the Hungarian Legation in Vienna.
 Gyula DECSI, Dr., Colonel.
 László JUHÁSZ, Colonel, Chief of AVH Division VI.
 József SZABERSZKY, Colonel.
 László GARAMVÁNYI, Captain in AVH Division I/2.

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d. The following individuals were relieved from office:

Dezso LAKATOS, Colonel, Chief of AVH Division V.
 Jozsef FERENCZIK, Colonel, Chief of AVH Division I.
 János VERTES, Major, Chief of AVH Division VIII/1.
 János KOMLÓS, Major, Chief of AVH Division I/2.
 Simon SARKADI, Major, Chief of AVH detachment [redacted]
 Miklós GELBER, Captain, Chief of AVH detachment [redacted]
 Pál RÁCZ, Lieutenant, Member of the [redacted] AVH detachment.

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- e. [redacted] there were two stories extant concerning the nature of PETER's arrest. One was that his arrest took place in Budapest in the presence of RAKOSI; Minister FARKAS; General NOGRADI, Assistant Minister of Defense; and Géza RÉVÉSZ, Chief of Military Intelligence. Another rumor related that PETER was sent to Russia to meet Lavrenti, BERIA, was taken into custody there, and was brought home later. PETER's entire family was also taken into custody.

3. Political Purges

- a. The purge against the "Organization of Generals," in mid-1950, was handled by Gábor PETER, prior to his own dismissal. The figures purged were Lt. General SOLYOM, who was Chief of Staff and a regular Army officer; Major General REVAY, Chief of the Kossuth Military Academy; and Lt. General SZALVAI. The SOLYOM trial was held in secret and the AVH membership was not aware of the fact that it was in progress.
- b. The trials of SZAKASITS; MAROSÁN; RIES, Minister of Justice; KADAR, KALLAI; Minister of Foreign Affairs, and ZOELD were also held in secret. These men had large followings and there was danger that a Party split would occur if the trials were publicized. KADAR was reputed to be one of the most popular figures in Hungary, with large masses of workers as his supporters. It is said that after his execution, large numbers of threatening letters were written to Party functionaries throughout Hungary signed "KADAR Guard." This movement was at the time considered a real threat to the power of the Party.

[redacted] Comments:

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- ¹The following personalities are not positively identified as the persons mentioned [redacted] but are possibly identical: 50X1-HUM

Major Dezso RADVÁNYI, Chief of the AVH Budapest Area Administration, may be identical with the Major RADVANYI (fnu) arrested in the SZUECS purge.

Lt. Colonel Joseph KAJLI, in charge of AVH security Troops, may be identical with the Colonel KAJLI (fnu) dismissed from service as a result of the SZUECS purge.

Gyocergy SZENDI, Captain in the Political Police and brother-in-law of Miklos BAUER, may be identical with Gyocergy SANDI (LANDI?), arrested in the PETER purge.

Major Endre CSAPO, head of the AVH Supply Section, may be identical with the CSAPO (fnu), Chief of an unknown section in AVH Division VII, arrested in the PETER purge.

General Mihaly SZALVAI, Chief of the Frontier Guards, may be

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identical with the Lt. General SZALVAI, purged in the "Organization of Generals."

²The functions of AVH divisions, referred to in this report are listed below:

Division I:	Internal Counter Intelligence
Division I/2:	Investigation of Subversive Elements
Division I/6:	Traffic Section
Division II:	Military Counter Intelligence
Division VIII:	Positive Intelligence Operations
Division VIII/1:	Yugoslav Operations
Division VIII/3:	Western European Operations (areas other than Yugoslavia)

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